

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
RARE BIRD RECORDS
JUNE - JULY 2009

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Gray hawk	1-2	6/01-7/31	Cottonwood Camp	many observers	unc.
	1-2	6/01-7/31	RGV-Daniels Ranch	many observers	unc
	1	7/18	Boulder Meadow	Barry Zimmer	unusual location
Common black-hawk	1-2	6/1-7/31	Rio Grande Vill.	Many observers	rare
Golden eagle	2imm	7/04	Santa Elena Cyn Rd	Phil Ziegler	rare
	1imm	7/23	Panther Junct.	Richard Sharpe	rare
Berylline Hummingbird*	1juv	7/29	Window Trail	David Elkowitz	acc.
*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. Pending review.					
Couch's kingbird	2	7/17	Cottonwood Camp.	Barry Zimmer	rare
Dusky-capped Flycatcher*	2	7/18	Pinnacles Camp	Barry Zimmer	rare
*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. Pending review.					
Black-capped Vireo	2-3 pair	6/01-7/31	Window Trail	many observers	rare
Yellow-green Vireo	1	6/26-27	Panther Junct.	Angie Dean	acc
Black-throated Green warbler	1m	7/18	Boulder Meadow	Barry Zimmer	?sum
Painted redstart	1-2	6/01-7/31	Boot Canyon	many observers	spo.
Rufous-capped Warbler*	2	7/17	Window Trail	Barry Zimmer	spo.
*Texas Review Species: Reports and images to TBRC:Lockwood. Pending review.					
Flame-colored Tanager*	1f	7/18	Boot Canyon TR	Barry Zimmer	acc.
*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. Pending review.					
Indigo bunting	1-3m	7/17-20	Window Trail	many observers	rare

Rare Bird Reports June-July, 2009

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period June 1 - July 31. I've compiled only those observations for species which are listed as **Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?sum" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the summer season.

Summer Season: General Weather Patterns

It was all or nothing for rain this summer season: The heavy mid-May rainfall of late spring was followed by a month of hot and dry conditions typical of a Big Bend early summer. Heavy rains that fell park-wide mid-June brought relief for about a week, followed by yet another month-long dry spell. At mid-July, another period of rain occurred, but this time in a more isolated fashion, with the Panther Junction area missing out of the needed moisture. A comparison of year-to-date rainfall with the same time frame in 2008(+ or -) demonstrates the extent to which the headquarters area fell behind during the period.

<u>Station</u>	<u>YTD Precip</u>	<u>Change from '08</u>	<u>June/July Precip.</u>
Panther Junction	6.78"	-1.16"	3.85"
Chisos Basin	8.91"	-0.42"	6.09"
Rio Grande Vill.	8.28"	+5.19"	5.43"
Castolon	7.46"	+2.11"	4.12"
Persimmon Gap	10.32"	+5.34"	5.48"

Summer Season: The Birds

Perhaps it was the hot and dry weather, perhaps the economic times, but it seemed as if fewer birders were in the park this summer, particularly in June. The only bird of note during that month was a yellow-green vireo (last reported in June, 1998) that showed up in Panther Junction for two days, then vanished.

In spite of the paucity of birders, there were a number of rare species reported, including four review species, three of which were found by Barry Zimmer in a two day period in July: It began with the remarkable find of a pair of singing **rufous-capped warblers** $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down the Window Trail on July 17. Zimmer was able to photograph the birds and notify park staff within a few hours of the observation. As is so often the case however, follow-up trips by a number of birders over the next two weeks failed to re-locate the warblers. The last documented and accepted record for the park was in August, 2004. Zimmer continued the next day into the high country of the Chisos and reported a gray hawk and a male black-throated green warbler in the Boulder Meadow area; a very unusual location for the hawk, and a first summer record for the warbler. Further on up the trail, Zimmer located a pair of **dark-capped flycatchers** at the Pinnacles campsites, most likely the same pair reported slightly higher along the Pinnacles Trail earlier in May. On the same trip, Zimmer finished the day with an observation of a female **flame-colored tanager** along the Boot Canyon Trail, echoing last summer's documented and accepted record of a female tanager in the same general area. Finally, while searching for the rufous-capped warblers along the Window Trail some two weeks after the initial report, Elkowitz reported a juvenile **Berylline hummingbird** near the end of the trail in the company of many Lucifer, black-

chinned, rufous and broad-tailed hummers. There is only one accepted record of this species in the park. Reports have been submitted for all four species to the Texas Bird Records Committee and are pending review.